



Craven Local Plan Examination

Opening Statement by Craven District Council

Hearing Day 1 – Tuesday 9th October 2018 (Week 1)

Craven District Council Local Plan Opening Statement

1. Firstly, on behalf of Craven District Council, I would like to welcome the Inspector, Mr Matthew Birkinshaw, and all those attending this public examination.
2. I would also like to thank Tony Blackburn, the Programme Officer, for his advice, support and knowledge to facilitate the smooth management of the Examination process so far.
3. The purpose of the Examination is to allow independent scrutiny by the Inspector of whether the preparation of the Local Plan has met the legal requirements for compliance and whether the content of the policies of the Local Plan meet the tests of soundness. The Examination is, therefore, tightly focused on these matters. However, as part of the background, the Council thinks it is helpful to provide some context as to what the Local Plan is seeking to achieve, as this is relevant to whether the Local Plan is sound.
4. The Local Plan is a key mechanism for the Council to deliver its priorities and in doing so it has been produced with a range of issues being considered and addressed. These include:
 - Falling resident workforce: As the existing housing stock is increasingly occupied by older/retired households, new housing is essential to help younger households to move to or stay in Craven which will help to rebalance the age profile of the area; maintain mixed and balanced communities with access to services and improves the supply of local labour for businesses.
 - Affordable housing need: House prices and rents relative to local incomes are high. In common with many parts of the UK, house prices have not readjusted relative to wages which has resulted in considerable affordable housing need
 - Greenfield Development: The limited supply of brownfield land means that to meet objectively assessed development needs, greenfield sites will be required for development.
 - High Quality Environment: Meeting objectively assessed development needs will need to be reconciled with the appropriate protection of the

plan area's outstanding environment, including its natural and historic assets.

- Employment land: Demand from local business for space to grow and limited serviced employment land available to support our future prosperity.
 - Transport: There are opportunities for improved connectivity and economic links with Lancashire and West Yorkshire via road and rail networks.
5. Craven is a distinctive and attractive place to live, work and visit, offering a fulfilling and vibrant community life. Craven is a large rural district with two thirds of the area in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Although sparsely populated it is generally well connected to Leeds, Bradford, East Lancashire and Lancaster. It is the home to a range of successful companies that are essential for our communities' future prosperity.
 6. The Local Plan will build on these factors to provide greater equality amongst our communities in terms of housing choice, better paid local job opportunities, more opportunities for pursuing a healthy and active lifestyle and access to services upon which residents, of all ages, depend. In developing the Local Plan we have aimed to embrace all of these factors.
 7. The location, design and sustainable construction of these new homes, along with business premises and other commercial enterprises help reduce carbon emissions, fuel poverty and waste and respects the distinctive character and heritage of their surroundings, reinforcing a 'sense of place'. We aim for new homes to have good access by walking, cycling, public transport and car to local facilities, employment areas, town centres and the countryside.
 8. We are working closely with North Yorkshire County Council, York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership and the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to support the implementation of the Local Plan.
 9. Since the development of the Local Plan started in 2010 there have been significant changes in both national planning policy and also the fluctuations of the national and local economic and demographic outlook. We have consistently revised and reviewed the Local Plan using the most up to date information and consulted with stakeholders at every step. The Local Plan is supported by robust and proportionate evidence - on housing,

employment, infrastructure and viability. It has also undergone a sustainability appraisal to assess reasonable alternatives and consider the Plan's environmental, social and economic impacts. We believe that this journey has led to the creation of a Local Plan that successfully promotes necessary growth while protecting our important landscapes and built environment. The Local Plan responds to the issues facing Craven by positively seeking opportunities including setting a housing target above our objectively assessed needs and the standardised methodology.

10. The consultations have focused on the key issues that have shaped this Local Plan:
 - The requirement for housing
 - Understanding the role of settlements
 - The suitability of development sites in the area.
 - Infrastructure provision.
 - Economic growth
 - Habitat protection
 - Development of green space
 - The viability of the Local Plan

11. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the preparation of the Craven Local Plan, including adjoining Local Authorities, the National Park, Government Agencies, the development industry and in particular our communities for their active involvement.

12. We hope that they can see how they have directly informed and influenced and shaped this Plan.

13. The Council has worked constructively and cooperatively with partners, including those recognised under the legal duty to cooperate. The Council has reached agreement on key issues through the preparation of Statements of Common Ground on a variety of issues including:
 - Housing strategy
 - Alignment of settlement strategies
 - Landscape relationship
 - Meeting shared housing and employment needs
 - Strategic transport linkages
 - Flood Risk and resilience

14. We are keen to adopt the Local Plan as soon as possible - in line with government aspirations - and to begin implementing its policies so that the district benefits from an up to-date planning framework. The Council has given delegated authority to officers to agree modifications to the Local Plan to help facilitate the examination process in the event that the Inspector should conclude that changes are necessary to make the Local Plan sound. Some suggested modifications have already been put forward and are identified in the Examination library documents.

15. To conclude, the Council considers that the Local Plan provides a sound, ambitious and balanced blueprint for the sustainable development of Craven outside of the National Park up to 2032 and we therefore welcome this public examination.

Thank you

Craven District Council

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